

Notice of motion, full council, 7 March 2019

Aberdeenshire Council notes:

1. Many UK councils already recycle or compost over 60 per cent of household waste, including large rural authorities, with some councils now at or close to 70 per cent of household waste recycled or composted.
2. Energy from waste plants depend on combustion of plastics and biodegradable waste. Burning oil-derived plastics adds to carbon dioxide emissions like burning other fossil fuels. Compared with disposal in energy from waste plants, composting of biodegradable waste generates far less carbon dioxide and produces material that improves soil.
3. Incineration results in high levels of greenhouse gas emissions. For every tonne of waste burned, typically more than one tonne of carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere.
4. The proposed deposit schemes for plastic bottles will remove much plastic and other material from household waste.
5. The proposed complete ban on single use plastics, approved by the European Parliament in October 2018 and due to take effect in 2021.
6. The guidance of the EU Commission dated 26 January 2017 recommending measures including introducing incineration taxes, phasing out support for waste incineration and introducing a moratorium on new facilities.
7. Incineration is contrary to circular-economy principles (now adopted by the UK and Scottish governments), based on keeping resources in use for as long as possible and recovering and regenerating products and materials at the end of each service life.
8. The EU circular-economy package became law on 4 July 2018, with full UK government support.
9. Research for the UK government by WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) showed developing a circular economy would create over 200,000 new jobs and reduce unemployment by over 50,000 as well as offset eleven per cent of future losses in skilled employment.
10. Energy from waste plants generate many toxins, pollutants and microscopic particles that can be harmful to human health and the natural environment.
11. The large capacity of the proposed Ness Energy Project will generate demand for mixed waste and act as a perverse incentive to recycling and waste minimisation and may result in competition for limited supplies of commercial waste.
12. Leading companies in the provision of energy from waste plants have run into financial difficulties while others are ceasing their involvement with incineration.
13. The opposition of all the community councils representing the communities most affected by the Ness Energy Project.
14. The high levels of risk (eg due to changes in regulation) associated with a long term commitment to an energy from waste project, potentially burdening future Aberdeenshire residents with costs for an obsolete plant.

Accordingly, Aberdeenshire Council agrees to proceed no further with its involvement as a partner in the Ness Energy Project.